Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of characterizing a system, the method comprising:

logging outages of the system;

measuring directly one or more additional indicia associated with each outage, the one or more additional indicia selected from frequency, duration and business impact of the outage; and

calculating a Figure of Merit (FOM) ~~based on~~ by adding contributions of each outage, the outages being weighted in accordance with one of a plurality of relative weight values selected based on [[with]] the associated additional indicia, and wherein each of the relative weight values corresponds to a range of values of the associated additional indicia and wherein each of the relative weighted values differs from other ones of the relative weighted values.

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Claims 2 (previously presented): The method of claim, wherein the FOM includes a business impact weighted availability, reliability or maintainability measure.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the FOM includes a business impact weighted server panic index.

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the outage logging is performed on a system-wide basis.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the outage logging is performed for individual subsystems, services and functionality of the characterized system.

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the outage logging encodes a level of performance degradation.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 1, further comprising: